

and dedication to public safety, Officer Niemi earned the respect and admiration of those with whom he worked.

Officer Niemi will long be remembered for his courage, service, and bravery. He will be missed by all who knew him. Officer Niemi is survived by his parents Rudie and Mildred Niemi; brother Jim; wife Dionne; daughter Gabrielle; and stepson Josh Hewitt. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN NIGER

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise to express my deep concern about the unnecessary suffering that is occurring in the African country of Niger. Last year's severe drought and locust infestation destroyed most of Niger's harvest and the fodder necessary for keeping livestock. As a result, an estimated 3.6 million people including 800,000 children under the age of 5—are now facing starvation. Aid workers in the field describe the situation as desperate, and report that children are dying daily and families have turned to a diet of acacia leaves and grass.

I urge the administration to continue to respond and to work with other donors to ensure Niger's humanitarian needs are met. In particular, it is crucial that USAID make certain the recently announced \$7 million in additional emergency funds go immediately towards alleviating the hunger in the hardest hit areas: the agro-pastoral regions of Maradi and Tillaberi and the pastoral regions of Tahoua and Zinder. Reportedly, there is a shortage of therapeutic feeding centers and clinics, and weakened villagers cannot manage the travel required to reach them.

We also need to address long-term food security issues in the Sahel, where drought and famine regularly afflict these poorest nations. Earlier this year I traveled to three of Niger's neighbors—Algeria, Mali, and Chad. I heard firsthand accounts of how devastating the locust crisis was, and I heard a consensus regarding the need for permanent mechanisms to facilitate crisis response and to prevent emergencies in the future. As the tragedy in Niger demonstrates, even when governments, international organizations, and NGOs are able to anticipate food insecurity almost a year in advance and implement their assistance programs, we can still have a crisis. Unfortunately, it sometimes takes media coverage of already emaciated children to jolt donor countries into emergency action. We need to remain alert and responsive to World Food Program appeals for extra funding before the starvation begins, and we need to stay committed to long-term efforts to improve food security throughout the region.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING GUS FLOROS

• Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, today I would like to honor a wonderful Virginian and American, Mr. Gus Floros, who this year is celebrating his 50th Anniversary of immigrating to America.

Born on May 25, 1928, in Greece, Gus Floros immigrated to the United States in 1955 settling in Harrisonburg, VA. He quickly went to work in his aunt and uncle's restaurant, Jess' Lunch, on Main Street in Harrisonburg. By 1967 he had purchased the restaurant and with a hands on approach and a commitment to excellence, he made Jess' Lunch one of Harrisonburg's finest eating establishments. Gus has expanded Jess' Lunch dramatically and in 2003 even built a sister location called Jess' Lunch 2.

Gus Floros is a fine example of the great American dream coming true. He is an inspiration to many. Upon his arrival in America, Gus had just one dollar in his pocket. Today he owns two successful restaurants in Harrisonburg that attract both local residents and those who are passing by on interstate 81. Through his entrepreneurial spirit, Gus Floros has made Jess' Lunch an eatery known across the Commonwealth. I often stop in to see Gus and have one of his tasty hotdogs or hamburgers whenever I am in Harrisonburg. You can always find quick, friendly service and a satisfying meal at Jess' Lunch and Gus is always there working just as hard as he did back in 1955.

I congratulate Gus Floros on 50 years of prosperity and good fortune, and I wish him continued success as he continues to serve the residents of Harrisonburg with a warm smile and a hearty meal.●

TRIBUTE TO JIM BERNSTEIN

• Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a North Carolinian who passed away on June 12, 2005, but will always be dear to our hearts. Jim Bernstein's work ended as it began—in selfless service to underserved communities in need. A career arc that began with volunteer service with the U.S. Peace Corps in Morocco ended with post-retirement volunteer service to the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services' rural health initiatives. In between, Jim provided the Nation and the State of North Carolina with more than 30 years of distinguished leadership in a variety of health and social policy arenas, including rural health, health care finance, public health, social service delivery, medicaid, nonprofit management and health care system innovation.

After earning a bachelor of arts degree in political economy from John Hopkins University in 1964 and a masters of hospital administration from the University of Michigan in 1968, Jim

began his lifelong health care service as the director of Indian Health Services for Northern New Mexico. In 1970, he was awarded a 3-year fellowship in the U.S. Public Health Service, and relocated to North Carolina to concentrate his studies on rural health and fuel a passion that would serve as the basis for the next 35 years of his career.

In 1973, while still in his 20's, Jim became the director of the Nation's first Office of Rural Health, located in North Carolina. In that role—which he held for nearly 30 years—Jim spearheaded the development and implementation of a medical recruitment service designed to help rural and medically underserved communities recruit physicians and other health care providers. Since then, more than 2,500 physicians, nurse practitioners, physicians' assistants, dentists and other health care professionals have been recruited to North Carolina. He also directed the development of 83 community-owned health centers, and led the creation of Community Care of North Carolina, a care management program that today provides access to high-quality, cost-effective care to more than 643,000 North Carolinians. Those efforts—and countless others—have positioned the State's rural health function as a nationally recognized model of excellence.

Throughout his career, Jim served as a director, chairman or consultant to more than two dozen professional organizations, including: National Rural Health Association, where he was president from May 1994 to May 1995; National Advisory Committee on Rural Health—U.S. Public Health Service, Office of Rural Health Policy, 1994 to 1995; Institute of Medicine—Committee for Guidance in Designing a National Health Care Disparities Report, Washington, DC 2001 to 2005; Commissioner, Prospective Payment Assessment Commission, where he was selected by the U.S. Congress to advise the body on Medicare finance; 1990 to 1996; chairman, Advisory Panel to the Office of Technology Assessment's Study on Rural Health Care, U.S. Congress; 1988; Delegate, National Medical Tour to the People's Republic of China, 1978; Consultant, National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine—Task Force on Study of Health Needs in Egypt, Cairo, Egypt; 1978. His extraordinary commitment to lifelong community service to these and dozens of other organizations garnered him the North Carolina Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2005.

In 1982, upon the recommendation of a State legislative study commission, Jim helped establish the North Carolina Foundation for Advanced Health Programs, Inc, NCFAHP. From 1982 to 2005, he served as the foundation's president, helping it spearhead projects targeting the health care needs of low-income underserved communities. Under Jim's leadership, NCFAHP secured more than 40 grants totaling more than \$17 million, allowing it to

implement dozens of programs for enhancing health care delivery across the State. He also served as national director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Practice Sights Program through NCFAHP.

Before retiring in 2005, Jim had, since 2001, served as assistant secretary for Health at the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. In that role, he oversaw the North Carolina Departments of Facility Services, Medical Assistance, Mental Health, Minority Health, Public Health and Rural Health. He also served as an adjunct professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, Department of Social and Administrative Medicine; 1979 to 2005 and as an adjunct assistant professor at the School of Medicine at Duke University in Durham, NC, Department of Community and Family Medicine; 1978 to 2005.

Jim's impact on North Carolina will never be forgotten. He was a champion for rural health care and the belief that every individual should have access to high-quality health care.●

RECOGNITION OF BENNIE COOLEY

● Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise to recognize an outstanding marksman and employee at Idaho National Laboratory: Bennie Cooley, who with teammate Todd Salmon has recently won the 2005 World Sniper Championship.

Bennie Cooley is no stranger to such competitions, as he currently holds three world titles and seven national titles within the shooting disciplines, but this competition was particularly special to him because many of the participants were some of the finest members of our Armed Forces and the national law enforcement community. Like him, I believe that all these competitors are world champions in their own right.

Bennie has made a career at the Idaho National Laboratory, beginning as a security police officer for the Laboratory before moving to the Laboratory's special response team where he became a team leader. He is now a firearms safety engineer, "part of a team that makes security successful, especially in the safety realm . . . able to articulate anything that's necessary to help keep us safe," according to one of his superiors, because of his knowledge of firearms.

Respect for firearms and marksmanship have been important qualities throughout our Nation's history and it is rewarding to see those values preserved and practiced by people like Bennie Cooley.

As Mr. Cooley continues to assure the safety of Idaho National Laboratory and to demonstrate his excellence in the art of marksmanship, I wish him good luck and offer congratulations and thanks for his dedication to public service.●

350 YEARS OF JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA

● Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the Jewish community on 350 years of Jewish life in America. In September of 1654, 23 Jews founded the first Jewish community in America when they sailed to what was then New Amsterdam. The Jewish community in this country has a rich and fascinating history, surmounting numerous obstacles and working diligently to make great contributions to our Nation. I offer my sincerest congratulations to the Jewish community on reaching this important milestone and express my endorsement of the 350th Rabbinical Resolution and ask that it be printed in the RECORD.

The resolution follows:

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Let it be known that in Elul 5764 (September 2004) the Jewish community of the United States began a year long commemoration marking the 350th Anniversary of Jewish settlement in this country.

With the help of God and under the protection of the Constitution of the United States, we have lived and prospered in this land. We have been an integral part of American life. We have worked with all other Americans in the never-ending effort to keep secure the democratic way of life. Our ancient prophetic ideals and the teachings of our sages serve as cornerstones of this Nation's values. Our work, our hopes, and above all, our living religion have been among our proudest offerings to the American community.

In some lands across the seas the Jewish people have felt the searing flame of prejudice, persecution and death. The American Jew has had the sad, yet inspiring opportunity to bring comfort to the oppressed, the joyous opportunity to participate in the reconstitution of the Jewish state on the ancient soil of Israel, and the inescapable and ennobling responsibility to mend the broken places in our world.

Even as we have worked for the well-being of our people abroad, the Jewish people in America have struggled to preserve our noble heritage, our historic traditions, our ancient teachings, our ethics, and our spiritual ideals in the free climate of our Nation.

Mindful of our manifold blessings and with deep gratitude in our hearts to the God of Israel, who, in 1654, led our forebears to the shores of this great new land,

We have proclaimed the period from Elul 5764 (September 2004) through Elul 5765 (September 2005) to be one of special thanksgiving, prayer, study, reflection and celebration to mark the 350th Anniversary of Jewish Communal Life in America. We call on all American Jewry to participate in the observance of this anniversary; to thank God for the bountiful blessings that have been bestowed on us in this remarkable land. Let us express our col-

lective hope that peace, security, and prosperity will reign in our Nation for all.

May the principles of freedom and liberty that have been the lodestar values of this great Republic continue to radiate their blessings on our Nation.

Central Conference of American Rabbis

Rabbi Harry Danziger, President
Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbi Perry Raphael Rank, President
Rabbinical Council of America
Rabbi Dale Polakoff, President
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rabbi Brant Rosen, President.●

RETIREMENT OF DR. BRUCE HALVERSON

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor Dr. Bruce Halverson on the occasion of his retirement as president of Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD.

Dr. Halverson, a native of Sioux Falls, is the first alumnus to ever serve as Augustana's president. As a member of the class of 1966, he majored in speech and drama, earning cum laude distinctions. He continued his education at the University of Washington where he secured his Ph.D. in theater history in 1971.

Following graduation, Dr. Halverson compiled an impressive resume, including an array of educational and theatrical credits. As a theater director throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, he worked with award-winning actors, producing and directing pieces he occasionally even co-authored. In addition to his professional stage work, Dr. Halverson served as dean of the School of Theatre at Florida State University, as well as artistic director and chairman of theater departments at various universities, including the University of Illinois, Grinnell College, and Ithaca College. Moreover, he was director of education at the National Institute for the Deaf, where he displayed his skills and dedication as an educator and advocate of equal opportunity. Most recently, Dr. Halverson has shown his commitment to South Dakota by returning to his alma mater in 2000 as the 22nd president of Augustana College.

During his presidency, Augustana implemented \$13 million in projects to expand the campus, including constructing the Fantle Building for the Center for Western Studies, enhancing the Elmen Center, and creating the Center for the Visual Arts. A new football training facility is also in progress. Under Dr. Halverson's leadership, Augustana's \$50 million Sunrise Capital Campaign is expected to successfully conclude around the time of his retirement. Further, he has been praised for his work in securing a record number of State scholarships for Augustana students. In recognition of his dedication to the college, Augustana's board of trustees asked